

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MONTEV 00210 01 OF 03 191412Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 PC-01 HA-05 IGA-02 /074 W
-----057980 191538Z /43

R 191101Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5650

INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PANAMA

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MONTEVIDEO 0210

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PGOV, PINT, PHUM, UY

SUBJ: URUGUAYAN CONDITION

1. SUMMARY. THE RECENT ANTI-US PRESS CAMPAIGN IS THE SURFACE MANIFESTATION OF A POLITICAL DEBATE BETWEEN MODERATES AND RIGHTISTS WITHIN THE GOU WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME TIME. IT SURFACED AT THIS TIME BECAUSE THE EXTREME RIGHT IS FEARFUL THAT THE NEW ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF, WHO TAKES COMMAND IN FEBRUARY, WILL FOLLOW A LIBERAL LINE WHICH WILL JEOPARDIZE THEIR POSITIONS. CHANGE IS WHAT THE RIGHTISTS FEAR, AND ACCOMMODATION WITH THE USG WOULD REQUIRE THE DINDS OF CHANGES THEY FEAR MOST OF ALL. IRONICALLY, IN OVERPLAYING THEIR HAND, THE RIGHTISTS MAY HAVE SHOCKED THE MORE NUMEROUS MODERATES IN THE GOU INTO THE REALIZATION THAT THE EXTREME RIGHT IS A REAL AND PRESENT DANGER. END SUMMARY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MONTEV 00210 01 OF 03 191412Z

2. EVENTS OF THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, BEGINNING WITH THE VISIT OF CONCSOUTH COMMANDER, LT. GEN. MCAULIFFE, HAVE BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE CURRENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN SURGING BELOW FOR SOME TIME. A DEBATE, OF SORTS, HAS BEEN GOING ON WITHIN THE GOU ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. A MODERATE, CONSTRUCTIVE LINE--ONE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE INTERNAL REFORMS COUPLED WITH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IAHRC AND OTHER

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS TO IMPROVE THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE--HAS BEEN URGED BY AMBAS-SADOR PEREZ CALDAS AND HIS EMBASSY STAFF IN WASHINGTON, AND SUPPORTED BY MANY WITHIN THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND. AT THE OTHER EXTREME, FOREIGN MINISTER ALEJANDRO ROVIRA AND HIS DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ALVARO ALVAREZ, HAVE BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF A HARDLINE POSITION OF ATTACKING ALL INTERNATIONAL CRITICS AS PART OF A COMMUNIST-INSPIRED CAMPAIGN OF CALUMNY, AND HAVE ADVOCATED (AND THUS FAR SUCCEEDED IN IMPLANTING) A POLICY OF REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE CREDENTIALS OF ANY INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP. THE GOAL OF THOSE WHO ADVOCATE THE PEREZ CALDAS TACK IS TO A) BEGIN THE PROCESS OF LIBERALIZING THE SOCIETY; B) REPAIR THE GOU'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND, C) IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE USG. THE GOAL OF THE HARDLINE GROUP ALLEGEDLY IS TO DEFEND URUGUAYAN DIGNITY AND SOVEREIGNTY. CARRIED TO ITS LOGICAL CON-CLUSING IT ISOLATES URUGUAY AND LEADS IT IN THE DIRECTION OF BECOMING A REGTIST ALBANIA. HOW THESE CONFLICTING POLICY LINES ARE DEBATED WITHIN THE GOU AND HOW A DECISION IS MADE FAVORING ONE OR ANOTHER LINE IS AS MYSTERIOUS AS ALCHEMY.

3. IRONICALLY, AN ARMED FORCES WHICH HAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE INEFFICIENCY AND CORRUPTION OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IT REPLACED HAS ADOPTED A FORM OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MONTEV 00210 01 OF 03 191412Z

COLLEGIATE EXECUTIVE WHICH CARRIED COLLEGIALLY TO AN EXTREME NEVER WITNESSED UNDER PAST "POLITICAL" GOVERNMENTS. ON ASSUMING POWER, THE ARMED FORCES IMPOSED ITS CUMBERSOME AND INEFFICIENT MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE AS THE HIGHEST-LEVEL POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING BODY. TO FURTHER COMPLICATE DECISION-MAKING THEY ADDED A COSMETIC CIVILIAN TO GIVE IT AN OUTWARD CIVILIAN/MILITARY APPEARANCE EVEN THOUGH REAL CONTROL REMAINED IN THE HANDS OF THE MILITARY. THE MOST NOTABLE QUALITY OF THIS RUBE GOLDBERG STRUCTURE IS ITS ABILITY TO MAKE KNEE-JERK BAD DECISIONS AND TO AGONIZE INTERMINABLY OVER CONSTRUCTIVE ONES. THUS, THE LEADING DAILY EL DIA WAS CLOSED PRECIPITOUSLY AND ITS EDITOR EXILED FROM THE COUNTRY FOR ALLOWING TWO WORDS INSULTING TO THE MILITARY TO APPEAR IN ITS WANT ADS (BOTH DECISIONS WERE REVERSED AT CONSIDERABLE LOSS OF FACE WITHIN A MATTER OF MONTHS), BUT THE SAME DECISION-MAKERS FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION TO RESPOND TO THE ALLEGED DISTORTIONS OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE LEVELED AGAINST THEM BY "POLITICAL ENEMIES".

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 MONTEV 00210 02 OF 03 191505Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 PC-01 HA-05 IGA-02 /074 W
-----058762 191538Z /44

R 191101Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5651
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PANAMA
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 MONTEVIDEO 0210

4. THE INTERNAL DEBATE, WHICH HAS TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A STRUGGLE FOR POWER WITHIN THE MILITARY, HAS A STRONG IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT. WHEN THE MILITARY ABOLISHED CONGRESS IN 1973 AND LATER IN 1976 WHEN IT REPLACED CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, IT TURNED ITS BACK ON THE TWO TRADITIONAL PARTIES AND FOUND ITSELF IN COMMON CAUSE WITH THE POLITICAL RIGHT AND EXTREME RIGHT. IT WAS NO ACCIDENT, THEREFORE, THAT WHEN IT ERECTED A CIVILIAN FACADE IN 1976 IT WOULD DRAW ON THOSE CIVILIANS WHO WERE EITHER OF THE RIGHT OR TRANSFORMED BY SELF-INTEREST TO FOLLOW A RIGHTIST BENT. THUS MENDEZ, A FASCIST SYMPATHIZER DURING WWII, WAS SELECTED AS PRESIDENT, ROVIRA (FROM THE RIGHT-WING OF THE BLANCO PARTY AND AN AVID ANTI-COMMUNIST) WAS GIVEN THE IMPORTANT FOREIGN MINISTER POST AND BAYARDO BENGEOA (A POLITICAL CHAMELEON WITH NO SCRUPLES) WAS NAMED MINISTER OF JUSTICE. AROUND THESE THREE--AND BECAUSE OF THEIR INFLUENCE--LUIS VARGAS GARMENDIA (SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT--A NOTORIOUS ULTRA-RIGHTIST), AMANDARAIN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MONTEV 00210 02 OF 03 191505Z

MENDOZA (UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR AND AN EXTREME RIGHTIST WITH A STRONG ANTI-US BIAS), OAS AMBASSADOR ROCA (AN EXTREME RIGHTIST, ALSO ANTI-US) AND ALVARO ALVAREZ FOUND THEIR WAY INTO CRITICAL POSITIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT. THIS GROUP, THOUGH THEY DIFFER AMONGST THEMSELVES--SOME BEING COMMITTED, EXTREME RIGHTISTS (VARGAS GARMENDIA) AND OTHERS MERE OPPORTUNISTS (BENGOA AND ALVARO ALVAREZ)--HAS PUSHED THE RECENT CONFRONTATIONALIST LINE WITH RESPECT TO THE USG. THEY, IN CONCERT WITH MILITARY OFFICERS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THEM, WERE BEHIND THE RECENT ESCALATION OF THE ANTI-US PRESS CAMPAIGN. THEY ALSO HAVE BEEN THE MOST STRIDENT ANTI-US VOICES WITHIN THE GOU OVER THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF. ALVARO ALVAREZ, FOR EXAMPLE, IS THE ARCHITECT OF THE ATTACK ON THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (IAHRC), AND ON THE USG HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION. HE AND FONMIN ROVIRA HAVE DELIBERATELY BLACKENED THE REPUTATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE IAHRC AND HAVE MISREPRESENTED ITS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES. THEY ALSO HAVE CONSISTENTLY DISTORTED CONVERSATIONS HELD IN WASHINGTON WITH USG OFFICIALS TO WHICH THEY WERE A PARTY, AND HAVE CRITICIZED AMBASSADOR PEREZ CALDAS AND HIS MISSION STAFF AS TOO PRO-US.

5. THIS EXTREME RIGHTIST CIVILIAN CLIQUE--MANY WITH ANTECEDENTS IN THE PRO-AXIS MOVEMENT OF WWI--HAS AN IDEOLOGICAL BROTHERHOOD WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. RECENTLY RETIRED ARMY GENERAL ESTEBEN CRISTI IS CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE AS THE TITULAR MILITARY LEADER. HE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A MAN "DOMINATED BY HATE: ANTI-US, ANTI-SEMITIC, ANTI-MORMON." HIS FOLLOWERS ALLEGEDLY INCLUDE FEW OF THE CURRENT OFFICERS OF FLAG RANK, THOUGH CHIEF-OF-STAFF OF THE COMBINED STAFF, SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MONTEV 00210 02 OF 03 191505Z

ADM. SANGURGO, IS VIEWED AS "FASCISTIC" BY SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES AND IS OPENLY ANTI-AMERICAN. BUT BY-AND-LARGE THE HARDLINE GROUP IN THE MILITARY IS MADE UP ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY OF OFFICERS OF THE COLONEL LEVEL AND BELOW, MOST OF WHOM ARE ASSIGNED TO THE STRATEGICALLY PLACED FIRST DIVISION IN MONTEVIDEO. THEY INCLUDE THE LEADERS OF THE ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTION GROUP (ACOA), THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOPHOMORIC RIGHT-WING MILITARY HOUSE ORGAN EL SOLDADO AND A STRING OF OFFICERS WHOM WE ASSUME HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

6. THE REMAINDER OF THE ARMED FORCES OFFICER CORPS INCLUDING THE THREE CHIEFS OF STAFF AND THE KEY FLAG OFFICERS, LIKE MOST URUGUAYANS SHARE THE SAME POLITICAL IDEOLOGY ESPOUSED BY THE BLANCO AND COLORADO PARTIES.

MOST ARE POLITICAL MODERATES. THE AIR FORCE FLAG OFFICERS (GENERAL PALADINI, BRIGADIERS BORAD, BENDAHAN AND CARDOZA) ARE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AND THE MOST PRO-US. THE NAVY, WHICH OPPOSED THE DISOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IN 1973, HAS BEEN EMASCULATED THROUGH PURGES OF THE UNDESIRABLE "INSTITUTIONALISTS." NAVY CINC, ADMIRAL MARQUEZ, IS AN INTEMPERATE OPPORTUNIST WITH A CHECKERED REPUTATION. HE IS AMBITIOUS AND DANGEROUS. THE REMAINDER OF THE NAVY HIGH COMMAND IS RATHER NON-DESCRIPT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ADMIRAL SANGURGO.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 MONTEV 00210 03 OF 03 191514Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 PC-01 HA-05 IGA-02 /074 W
-----058862 191554Z /43

R 191101Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5652
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PANAMA
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 MONTEVIDEO 0210

7. THE ARMY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICE AND THE MOST PROVINCIAL. IT IS WITHIN THIS INSTITUTION THAT THE MAJOR CURRENT DRAMA IS BEING PLAYED, WITH THE SELECTION OF A NEW ARMY CINC TO REPLACE GENERAL VADORA IN FEBRUARY THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISION ON THE HORIZON. BOTH POTENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE CONSIDERED MODERATES. BUT ONE, GENERAL GREGORIO ALVAREZ, HAS SUCCEEDED THROUGH HIS INSISTENT DRUM-BEATING OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS IN NOT ONLY RAISING EXPECTATIONS AMONG PROGRESSIVES THAT MAJOR LIBERAL CHANGES WILL OCCUR UNDER HIS STEWARDSHIP BUT ALSO STOKING FEAR WITHIN THE HARDLINERS IN THE ARMY AND AMONG THE ULTRA-RIGHTIST CIVILIANS THAT THEY WILL BE EARLY VICTIMS OF HIS REFORMIST COMMAND. THE LATTER GROUP HAS RESPONDED BY THROWING UP DEFENSES

EITHER TO PREVENT HIS ASSUMING POWER OR TO CONSTRAIN
HIS FLEXIBILITY ONCE HE BECOMES CINC. CURRENT ARMY DATT
IN WASHINGTON, GENERAL LUIS QUIEROLO, IS THE POSSIBLE
SUBSTITUTE CHOICE. ALTHOUGH A MODERATE HE IS LESS FEARED
BY THE RIGHT BECAUSE HE IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE AS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MONTEV 00210 03 OF 03 191514Z

INTELLIGENT, DECISIVE AND FORCEFUL AS ALVAREZ.

8. THE ULTRA-RIGHTISTS FEAR CHANGE. THEY REMAIN PRO-
TECTED IF THE HARD LINE IS CONTINUED, IF THE "WAR
AGAINST SUBVERSION" IS PURSUED AND IF NOT ATTEMPT IS
MADE TO LIBERALIZE THE SOCIETY. IN A COUNTRY AS SMALL
AS URUGUAY WITH ITS 2.5 MILLION INHABITANTS, THE ULTRA-
RIGHT KNOWS THAT CHANGE WILL EXPOSE THEM TO REVANCHISM.
THE PRIVILEGED POSITIONS THEY NOW ENJOY WILL BECOME
VULNERABLE. SINCE THEY SHARE THE SINS OF RECENT ABUSES
OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS THEY RECOGNIZE THAT WHEN THE
PENDULUM SWINGS THEY COULD BECOME THE VICTIMS RATER
THAN THE VICTIMIZERS.

9. THE VISIT OF LT. GEN. MCAULIFFE WAS SEIZED UPON BY
THE EXTREME RIGHT TO DRAMATIZE THE DIFFERENCES WHICH
EXIST BETWEEN URUGUAY AND THE USG. THEY ATTACKED US THROUGH
MCAULIFFE BECAUSE THEY REALIZE THAT THE PRICE OF ACCOMMODATION
WITH THE USG IS THE TYPE OF LIBERALIZATION THAT MAKES THEM
VULNERABLE. IRONICALLY, IN ATTACKING US SO STRONGLY--
ESPECIALLY IN ATTACKING THE PENTAGON--THE RIGHT MAY HAVE
OVERPLAYED ITS HAND. IT HAS MADE ITSELF LOOK RIDICULOUS.
NO ONE SERIOUSLY BELIEVES THE EXTREME RIGHT LINE
THAT THE PENTAGON IS TRYING TO DOMINATE THE URUGUAYAN
ARMED FORCES OR THAT IT IS THE UNWITTING TOOL OF INTER-
NATIONAL COMMUNISM. EVEN NATIONALISM CAN BE OVER-
DONE. AS BRIG. PALADINI PUT IT IN A RECENT CONVERSATION
WITH THE AMBASSADOR, "WE LEARN BY SHOCKS, THE EVENTS
OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS ARE INSTRUCTIVE. WE DESTROYED
THE EXTREME LEFT--NOW WE HAVE THE EXTREME RIGHT TO
CONTENTEND WITH." THIS NEW EXPERIENCE MAY STIMULATE THE
MODERATES TO ACT IN CONCERT. UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE
RECENT PAST THE MODERATES HAVE CONSISTENTLY LOST OUT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MONTEV 00210 03 OF 03 191514Z

TO THE EXTREME RIGHT AND BAD POLICY WAS THE RESULT.
THE MODERATES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO IMPLEMENT A POSI-
TIVE FOREIGN POLICY POSTURE DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF AN
AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON WHO IS A FORMER CHIEF OF THE

AIR FORCE. IN GOOD URUGUAYAN FASHION THE MODERATES
FIND IT MORE COMFORTABLE TO STAND ASIDE THAN TO DO
BATTLE. THEY NEED TO BE CON-
STANTLY REMINDED OF THE WORDS OF EDMUND BURKE:
"ALL THAT IS REQUIRED FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL IS THAT
GOOD MEN DO NOTHING." PERHAPS RECENT EVENTS MAY HAVE
SHOCKED THEM OUT OF THEIR TRADITIONAL COMPLACENCY AND
HOPEFULLY WILL INSPIRE THEM TO ATTACK THE EVEIL ON THE
RIGHT.
PEZZULLO

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MONTEVIDEO0210
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780028-1134
Format: TEL
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780146/aaaabmb1.tel
Line Count: 342
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a3e83be2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3748381
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: URUGUAYAN CONDITION
TAGS: MPOL, PGOV, PINT, SHUM, UY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a3e83be2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014